

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-13 OMB-01 AID-05 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 /083 W

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FM AMCONSUL IBADAN

TO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 2536

AMCONSUL KADUNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L IBADAN 0669

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PGOV NI

SUBJECT: ONE MAN'S (RICHARD AKINJIDE) COMMENTS ON THE
CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

REF: LAGOS 8962

1. A FORMER FEDERAL MINISTER AND CURRENT CONTENDER FOR THE
CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY HAD SOME COMMENTS ON THE GREAT IMPORTANCE
OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY IN FUTURE NIGERIAN POLITICS AND
HAS SOME VIEWS ON A FEW OF THE CURRENT ACTORS WHICH PROVIDE
SOME BACKGROUND TO THE ELECTIONS AT THE END OF THE MONTH.

2. RICHARD AKINJIDE, FEDERAL MINISTER OF EDUCATION IN THE
BALEWA GOVT. AT THE TIME OF THE MILITARY COUP IN 1966, A
LEADER OF THE NNDP UNDER AKINTOLA, STAUNCH OPPONENT OF CHIEF
AWOLOWO AND THE ACTION GROUP, MORE RECENTLY PRESIDENT OF
THE NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION AND ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN THE
CONSTITUTIONAL DRAFTING COMMISSION, TOLD ME LAST WEEK THAT
HE CONSIDERED PARTICIPATION IN THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AS
ESSENTIAL TO ANY ASPIRING POLITICIAN WHO INTENDS TO BE
INFLUENTIAL IN FUTURE NIGERIAN POLITICS. HE SAID IT WAS THERE
THAT PERSONALITIES WILL MAKE THEMSELVES KNOWN AND FUTURE
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PARTIES AND ALLIANCES WILL BE FORMED. HE OBVIOUSLY HAS
EVERY INTENTION OF BEING THERE AND IS CONTESTING A CONSTIT-
UENCY IN IBADAN.

3. WHEN ASKED ABOUT BOLA IGE, CHIEF AWOLOWO'S PRINCIPAL
FOLLOWER AND A SEASONED AND RUNNING POLITICIAN HIMSELF,
(WHO WAS NOT RUNNING FOR THE CA AND HAD TOLD ME HE HAD

DECIDED NOT TO RUN SINCE HE BELIEVED IT INAPPROPRIATE FOR SOMEONE INTENDING TO PARTICIPATE IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS TO DEBATE THE RULES HIMSELF). AKINJIDE SAID THAT BOLA HAD HAD A VERY BITTER UNSUCCESSFUL STRUGGLE WITH HIS HALF-BROTHER DELE IGE OVER WHO SHOULD RUN IN THE OBOKUN DISTRICT, THE FAMILY POCKET BOROUGH. THUS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ACTORS FROM THE WEST IS OUT OF DIRECT CA ACTION.

4. AKINJIDA ADMITTED THAT THERE WOULD BE GREAT PRESSURES EXERTED ON THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILLORS BUT CHARACTERIZED THIS AS NORMAL POLITICS. IF IT WERE A QUESTION OF MONEY, AKINJIDE COULD WELL AFFORD IT FROM HIS LUCRATIVE LAW PRACTICE AND PROBABLE SUBSTANTIAL PROFITS FROM HIS TIME AS A POLITICIAN AND CABINET MEMBER.

5. WHEN ASKED ABOUT ALHAJ KOLA BALOGUN, THE PRESENT CHAIRMAN OF THE IBADAN MUNICIPAL LOCAL COUNCIL, AKINJIDE LAUGHED HIM OFF AS ONE OF NO EXPERIENCE COMPARED TO THE OLD-LINE POLITICIANS--UNDOUBTEDLY INCLUDING HIMSELF--WHO HAD LEARNED MUCH FROM THE MISTAKES OF THE PAST AND WOULD BE THE PRINCIPAL ACTORS IN THE FUTURE. HE UNDOUBTEDLY SHARES VIEWS PREVIOUSLY EXPRESSED TO ME THAT ALHAJ BALOGUN WAS NOTHING MORE THAN CHIEF AGBAJE'S "SMALL BOY", FORMER NCNC AND NNDP LEADER. HOWEVER, HIS PRESENT POSITION MAKES HIM A POWER TO BE CONTESTED WITH IN THE WEST. AN EXPERIENCED OBSERVER OF NIGERIAN POLITICS TOLD ME RECENTLY THAT AKINJIDE HIMSELF HAS LITTLE OR NO CHANCE

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FOR SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT IN THE WEST OR ELSEWHERE BECAUSE OF HIS CONNECTIONS WITH THE "HATED" AKINTOLA NNDP REGIME IN THE WEST. THAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN, AND HE IS AN EXPERIENCED POLITICIAN TO BE WATCHED.

6. AS FOR SOME INDICATION OF WHAT POLITICAL ALIGNMENTS ARE BEING BRUNTED ABOUT, WE HAVE HAD FROM A WIDE VARIETY OF SOURCES THE VIEWS EXPRESSED THAT WHATEVER HAPPENS, THE LINKS BEING CONTEMPLATED ARE BETWEEN THE EAST AND NORTH, WITH NO ONE -- EXCEPT THE YORUBA -- INDICATING ANY LIKING FOR AN ALLIANCE WITH THE WEST.

HOYT

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